

Learning English with CBC Calgary

Weekly newscast

February 1st 2013

Lessons prepared by Justine Light & Barbara Edmondson

Objectives of the weekly newscast lesson

- to develop listening skills at the CLB 4 level
- to increase vocabulary among learners
- to increase knowledge of news stories
- to provide a self-study tool, as well as, an ESL classroom resource



www.alberta.ca

<http://www.cbc.ca/calgary/learning-english/>

News story #1

Before you listen to the first news story, complete this vocabulary activity. It will help you to understand the listening more easily.

Vocabulary

Match the words with their definitions. *Answers are in the appendix.*

| Answer | Word | Definition |
|--------|----------------------|--|
| | 1. tragedy | a) a system that sprays water in an area when there is smoke or a fire |
| | 2. fire extinguisher | b) to be related to; to possibly have caused or affected a situation |
| | 3. sprinkler | c) a person who sees a crime or an event |
| | 4. decade | d) a small bit of fire that can fly from a burning log |
| | 5. detain | e) a tool that sprays water or foam used to put out fires |
| | 6. connection | f) to hold or to keep for an amount of time |
| | 7. inhalation | g) an exit from a building used in case of a fire, often stairs on the outside of a building |
| | 8. spark | h) a terrible or very sad event |
| | 9. witness | i) 10 years |
| | 10. fire escape | j) breathing in |

All the pieces were in place – It was the perfect set up for something to happen

Now listen to the first news story from the audio file.

Listening activity: Multiple Choice

Choose the best answer to complete the sentences. *Answers are in the appendix.*

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. There was a _____ in the Brazilian city of Santa Maria. | a) Sunday night party b) tragedy at a nightclub |
| 2. There were no _____ in the nightclub. | a) fire extinguishers, fire alarms or security b) fire alarms, sprinklers or fire escape |
| 3. It was the _____ of its kind in more than a decade. | a) world's worst fire b) world's most deadly accident |
| 4. Most of the 230 people who died were _____ and most died of smoke _____. | a) musicians / burns b) college students / inhalation |
| 5. Brazilian police have detained several people including _____ in connection with the fire. | a) college students and a guitarist b) the club co-owner and two members of the band |
| 6. Witnesses say some security guards blocked the doors because _____. | a) they thought people were leaving without paying b) they wanted people to watch the band |

Discussion Question

What are the emergency procedures for your building if there is a fire?

News story #2

Before you listen to the second news story, complete this vocabulary activity. It will help you to understand the listening more easily.

Vocabulary

Use one of the vocabulary words below to complete the sentences. *Answers are in the appendix.*

| | | |
|---------------------------------|--|---------------------|
| era (a specific period of time) | pioneers (the first people) | physical (built in) |
| global (adj. around the world) | corporate (belong to a company) | touchscreen |
| keypad (what we type on) | reveal (to show publicly) | shelves |

Extra definitions to help you understand the reading:

Make it or break it - one event could either create success or destroy a company

1. The pioneers traveled across Canada in covered wagons.
2. We are now in the _____ of smart phones. These new phones with _____ are a _____ success.
3. Apple and BlackBerry are _____ names we use when we talk about smart phones.
4. When I got my smart phone missed the _____ my old phone had.
5. When I got my laptop I had to get used to not having a _____ mouse, but instead use the mouse pad.
6. When a company _____ a new product they hope it will be competitive (compete with other products on the market).
7. I had to put up book _____ in my bedroom to hold all my books.

Now listen to the second news story from the audio file.

Listening Activity: Short Answer

Read and answer the questions below. *Answers are in the appendix.*

1. What did Canada's smart phone pioneer reveal on Wednesday?
2. What does this company hope the new products will do?
3. What was the name of this company?
4. What is the company's new name?
5. What are the two new products named?
6. How are these two products different?
7. What is special about the two new phones?

Discussion Question

Do you have a smart phone? Do you think it is necessary for people to keep up with the quickly changing technology? Why or why not?

News story #3

Before you listen to the third news story, complete this vocabulary activity. It will help you to understand the listening more easily.

Vocabulary - Read the definitions below, and then put the words in the sentences in the correct order. *Answers are in the appendix.*

| Words and Definitions |
|---|
| former – something in the past |
| psychiatrist – a medical doctor who helps people with mental illnesses |
| counts – total number of official charges |
| appeal- asking for a review of a criminal case or other official decision |
| victim- a person who is hurt or killed as a result of a crime, accident or disaster |
| bribe –money given to try to get something illegally |
| juror – a person who is on a jury for a criminal case |

Extra definitions to help you understand the reading:

house arrest – when a person is ordered to stay in their house instead of going to jail

1. teacher a is former My police officer.
My teacher is a former police officer.
2. saw the The psychiatrist patient twice week. a

3. abuse. animal neighbor My charged is with three counts of

4. victims 4 of the There attacker. were

5. when the newspaper The politician job his quit said he took bribe. a

6. to be. but I would I have never been juror a like

Now listen to the third news story from the audio file.

Listening Activity: True/False

Decide whether the statements below are **true** or **false**. Write your answer in the blanks. *Answers are in the appendix.*

1. ____ Aubrey Levin was originally charged with 3 counts of assault.
2. ____ Levin was found guilty of 3 counts of sexual assault.
3. ____ His victims were male and female.
4. ____ Levin was sentenced to five years in jail.
5. ____ Levin will not appeal his sentence.
6. ____ Levin's wife has also had legal problems.

Discussion Question Did you follow this story in the news? Why do you think so many people are upset about this case?

Language Focus

Noticing the 'be' verb

'be' – The verb **to be** is a very common verb in the English language. It is used in several different situations.

Common situations we use the 'be' verb:

1. To show the quality or state of someone or something
2. Simple Questions
3. To make the continuous/progressive tenses
4. To make the passive voice

Forms of the 'be' verb

| Form | Subject | Present tense | Past tense | Question | Continuous/ progressive |
|---------------------------|-----------|---------------|------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 st person | I | am | was | Am/was I hungry? | I am/was going. |
| 2 nd person | You | are | were | Are/were you happy? | You are/were studying. |
| 3 rd person | he/she/it | is | was | Is/was she thirsty? | He is/was running. |
| 1 st person pl | we | are | were | Are/were we ready? | We are/were eating. |
| 2 nd person pl | you | are | were | Are/were you tired? | You are/were learning. |
| 3 rd person pl | they | are | were | Are/were they here? | They are/were going. |

Passive voice - We focus on the action itself or on the object receiving the action, rather than who is doing it. The subject of the sentence receives the action.

Forming the passive voice: 'be' verb + past participle of the main verb.

Look at the following sentences from the first story. Which form of the 'be' verb are they using?

1. There **was** no fire alarm.
2. There **were** no sprinklers or fire escapes.
3. The result **was** the world's worst fire of its kind in more than a decade, with more than 230 people dead.
4. Most of the victims **were** college students 18 to 21 years old.
5. A co-owner of the club and two members of the band that **was** playing **were** said to be among those being held.
6. The band's guitarist told Brazilian media he saw flames touch the ceiling after the group's spark machine **was** started up.
7. Other witnesses said security guards who didn't know about the fire at first had blocked people they thought **were** leaving without paying their bills.

Transcripts of Weekly news stories

| | FEBRUARY 1 ST WEEKLY NEWS STORIES | TIME |
|--------------|--|-------|
| Introduction | Hi, this is Nadia Stewart You're listening to Learning English with CBC for February 1 st | 0:00 |
| Story 1 | <p>All the pieces were in place for the tragedy at a nightclub in the Brazilian city of Santa Maria early Sunday. There was no fire alarm. There were no sprinklers or fire escapes. And a fire extinguisher didn't work. The result was the world's worst fire of its kind in more than a decade, with more than 230 people dead. Most of the victims were college students 18 to 21 years old. Most died from smoke inhalation rather than burns.</p> <p>Brazilian police detained several people in connection with the fire. A co-owner of the club and two members of the band that was playing were said to be among those being held. The band's guitarist told Brazilian media he saw flames touch the ceiling after the group's spark machine was started up. Other witnesses said security guards who didn't know about the fire at first had blocked people they thought were leaving without paying their bills.</p> | 0:07 |
| Story 2 | <p>The former court psychiatrist found guilty this week of three counts of sexually assaulting male patients is going to jail. On Monday a jury gave that verdict. Aubrey Levin was originally charged with nine counts of sexual assault. On Thursday, a judge sentenced Levin to five years in jail but Levin has already filed an appeal. In her sentencing the judge called two of the sexual assaults serious. She also told Levin the victims had come to him for help but he instead just added to their problems. Levin's wife is under house arrest at this hour. She is accused of trying to bribe a juror.</p> | 01:05 |
| Story 3 | <p>New product, new era, new corporate name. After many delays Canada's smartphone pioneer revealed its new phones Wednesday, products it hopes will make it competitive once again. The company which used to be known as Research In Motion is now simply called BlackBerry...the name of its globally-known smartphones. The BlackBerry Z10, a touchscreen phone, will be the first to hit the shelves. The BlackBerry Q10, which will have a physical keypad, follows in April. The new models, with a whole new operating system, are seen by many as a make-or-break product for the company.</p> | 01:46 |

Answer keys

News story 1 Vocabulary

| Answer | Word | Definition |
|----------|----------------------|--|
| h | 1. tragedy | a) a system that sprays water in an area when there is smoke or a fire |
| e | 2. fire extinguisher | b) to be related to; to possibly have caused or affected a situation |
| a | 3. sprinkler | c) a person who sees a crime or an event |
| i | 4. decade | d) a small bit of fire that can fly from a burning log |
| f | 5. detain | e) a tool that sprays water or foam used to put out fires |
| b | 6. connection | f) to hold or to keep for an amount of time |
| j | 7. inhalation | g) an exit from a building used in case of a fire, often stairs on the outside of a building |
| d | 8. spark | h) a terrible or very sad event |
| c | 9. witness | i) 10 years |
| g | 10. fire escape | j) breathing in |

Listening

| | |
|---|--|
| 1. There was a _____ in the Brazilian city of Santa Maria. | a) Sunday night party b) tragedy at a nightclub |
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| 3. It was the _____ of its kind in more than a decade. | a) world's worst fire b) world's most deadly accident |
| 4. Most of the 230 people who died were _____ and most died of smoke _____. | a) musicians / burns b) college students / inhalation |
| 5. Brazilian police have detained several people including _____ in connection with the fire. | a) college students and a guitarist b) the club co-owner and two members of the band |
| 6. Witnesses say some security guards blocked the doors because _____. | a) they thought people were leaving without paying b) they wanted people to watch the band |

News story 2

Vocabulary

- The pioneers traveled across Canada in covered wagons.
- We are now in the era of smart phones. These new phones with touchscreens are a global success.
- Apple and BlackBerry are corporate names we use when we talk about smart phones.
- When I got my smart phone missed the keypad my old phone had.

5. When I got my laptop I had to get used to not having a physical mouse, but instead use the mouse pad.
6. When a company reveals a new product they hope it will be competitive (compete with other products on the market).
7. I had to put up book shelves in my bedroom to hold all my books.

Listening

1. What did Canada's smart phone pioneer reveal on Wednesday? *Their new phones*
2. What does this company hope the new products will do? *It hopes these phones will make the company competitive again.*
3. What was the name of this company? *Research In Motion*
4. What is the company's new name? *Blackberry*
5. What are the two new products named? *The Blackberry Z10 and the Blackberry Q10*
6. How are these two products different? *The Blackberry Z10 has a touchscreen and the Blackberry Q10 has a physical keypad.*
7. What is special about the two new phones? *They both have a whole new operating system*

News story 3

Vocabulary

1. My teacher is a former police officer.
2. The psychiatrist saw the patient twice a week.
3. My neighbor is charged with three counts of animal abuse.
4. I am going to appeal my grades for the course.
5. There were 4 victims of the attacker.
6. A politician quit his job when the newspaper said he took a bribe.
7. I have never been a juror but I would like to be.

Listening

1. F Aubrey Levin was originally charged with 3 counts of assault.
2. T Levin was found guilty of 3 counts of sexual assault.
3. F His victims were male and female.
4. T Levin was sentenced to five years in jail.
5. F Levin will not appeal his sentence.
6. T Levin's wife has also had legal problems.

Language Focus

1. There **was** no fire alarm. *3rd person past tense*
2. There **were** no sprinklers or fire escapes. *3rd person plural past tense*
3. The result **was** the world's worst fire of its kind in more than a decade, with more than 230 people dead. *3rd person past tense*
4. Most of the victims **were** college students 18 to 21 years old. *3rd person plural past tense*
5. A co-owner of the club and two members of the band that **was** playing **were** said to be among those being held. *Past continuous / passive*
6. The band's guitarist told Brazilian media he saw flames touch the ceiling after the group's spark machine **was** started up. *Passive*
7. Other witnesses said security guards who didn't know about the fire at first had blocked people they thought **were** leaving without paying their bills. *Past continuous*